

Wisconsin Foster Care Fact Sheet

- Foster parents give a child a safe and loving place to stay while the child's parents are unable to provide for them. These children come from a wide variety of backgrounds and situations. They are children of all ages and races. The children in the most need of homes are children with special needs, including teenagers, siblings and children with physical, emotional or behavioral disabilities. Above all, most of these children need a loving and stable place to call home.
- Many different types of people can be foster parents. A lot of people may think that only married couples can be foster parents or you have to own a home. In reality, people from all walks of life can be a foster parent. You can be young or old, home owner or renter, married or single, work in or outside the home or with or without children of your own. Most importantly, a foster parent needs to provide a safe and loving environment for these children.
- In order to become a foster parent, you must be 21 years of age or older and a responsible adult. A potential foster parent will be asked to provide information about their background, including alcohol or drug abuse or law violations that might make them unable to provide a safe environment. Withholding information can be grounds for denial of a license. The prospective foster parent(s) and their family will meet with a licensing specialist. They will provide orientation to the foster care program and training on parenting. If needed, there will be special emphasis on caring for special needs children.
- The amount of time a child stays in foster care can vary from as little as a few days to a number of years. Most children in foster care will return home in less than three months; however some children are still in foster care after three years.
- Most children in the foster program are not available for adoption, but the foster parents are eligible to apply if that child does come up for adoption. In fact, each year foster parents become the adoptive parents in approximately 80% of adoption cases in Wisconsin.
- Foster parents receive information about a child before they are placed in the home. The foster parent, along with the case manager can decide if the child should be placed in their home.
- Counties have many different resources available to support families with foster children. Staff is available to answer any questions that prospective parents may have and many communities provide ongoing training or support groups. A 24-hour answering service is available for emergencies.
- More than 5,100 families are currently licensed foster care providers in the state of Wisconsin.
- On average, 7,000 children in the state of Wisconsin will be placed with these foster families. On a typical day, approximately 8,000 children are living with foster families.
- For more information on the foster care program in Wisconsin or becoming a foster parent, please call 1-800-947-8074, contact your local county social/human service department or visit <http://www.wifostercareandadoption.org/>



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